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THE DEPARTMENT OF RED CROSS NURSING

IN CHARGE OF

CLARA D. NOYES, R.N.

Director, Department of Nursing

THE PRAGUE SCHOOL OF NURSING

"We are in our new house at last!" writes Marion G. Parsons, who in company with Alotta Lentell, is organizing a Training School for Nurses under the auspices of the American Red Cross in Prague, Czecho-Slovakia. "The building was started before the war, but was never finished. The Czecho-Slovak Red Cross has bought it, and will use two floors of it for offices, while we have the entrance floor and the two upper ones for the school. It is very difficult to find even a single room here, and absolutely impossible for a private individual to secure one except through a special bureau, so you see the Red Cross was really fortunate to find this building.

"There has been a great deal of interest shown in the work we are doing. We have had over two hundred inquiries from prospective students. Many of the letters are pathetic in their writers' desire for self improvement, and the patriotic spirit they reveal. We expect to take sixty students in this course. About twenty-eight of them will live in the house, these being chosen from among those who come from a distance. Girls having families in Prague will live at home. We hope to arrange to provide luncheon for all who wish it, as many of the people still show effects of undernourishment, and the food which they receive here will be of considerable benefit.

"As there is more or less jealousy and suspicion among the inhabitants of different parts of the new Republic, we feel that we must take students from Moravia and Slovakia as well as from the vicinity of Prague. In this way the school and its standards will become known through the entire country, while we on our part hope to make the course and the home so attractive that our students will be happy with us—some of them have known very little real joy—and also that we may help overcome the prejudice now existing against the nursing profession."

FROM POLAND

From Edith Benn, Chief Nurse of the Red Cross Commission to Poland comes an account of nursing activities at Warsaw.

"There is a surgical hospital being organized at Wilno, in which we hope that a training school may be established in the future. We

have opened up an orphanage at Bialystok in which six of our unit are stationed. Another has just left on an expedition to southern Russia to bring back Polish refugees. Although the work is not yet completely organized, it is nevertheless progressing, while we hear nothing but the finest reports of the splendid work being done by the nurses."

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING IN SIBERIA

Although only seven Red Cross nurses now remain in Siberia, public health nursing had been organized before the Siberian personnel was withdrawn, in Irkutsk under Grace Harrington, Chief Nurse of the Western Division, formerly a public health nurse in Seattle, Washington.

Opposite the railroad station in this city, in former Chinese shops requisitioned by the Siberian Government for this purpose, the Red Cross had established under public health nurses a typhus clearing station and dispensary. Next door to these was a branch office of the Red Cross Department of Civilian Relief, where applications were received, from which investigations were made and garments given out. This station had a peculiarly advantageous position, for although in the first five days after it opened no sign marked its advent (indeed the old Russian signs still reposed above the one-storied building) poor unfortunates learned quickly of its existence: the typhus beds were filled the first day and the sequence of patients in the first five days doubled and trebled, this in spite of the fact that the Medical Department of the Red Cross maintained a dressing station in cars on the tracks. The typhus ward had twelve beds in it at first, but it was necessary to crowd it to its absolute capacity (eighteen), and then very sick people were turned away. It was not possible to maintain this as a forty-eight hour detention station, for the typhus hospitals in Irkutsk, numerous as they were, were often unable to receive one more patient.

Eva L. Smythe, formerly Red Cross Public Health nurse in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, later spending a year in France in charge of public health work in the Loire region, was in charge of the station. Grace M. Miller, graduate of Jefferson College, Philadelphia, was her assistant.

Three Russian sisters, all immune to typhus, were in the ward and two American doctors were in the dispensary.

Annie L. Williams, a graduate of Long Island College Hospital, was the visiting nurse. Miss Williams has had experience rendering her invaluable in this kind of work. She kept largely to the railroad tracks, visiting "teplushkas" or box cars in which hundreds of refugees made their homes. With an interpreter she visited families,

spreading relief and help wherever she went, sending the sick, if able to go, to the dispensary, or finding a hospital if possible to which they might be removed, and caring for the destitute orphan children. The investigators for Civilian Relief reported, when necessary, cases throughout the city, but as they had a visiting physician working in their department, the work at the railroad station was confined chiefly to the refugees pouring down the line, and those living on the tracks.

As in all public health work, distressing, interesting, pathetic and laughable scenes were enacted every day. A post typhus patient weak from exposure, unable to speak, and with three fingers frozen was taken in. From the few words he wrote the interpreter gathered, that although in no fit condition, he had been turned out of a hospital to make room for a sicker man. He had had no shelter, no adequate covering and two days had brought him to this pitiable state.

A little boy, ill with typhus, lay half a day on a bench in the dispensary awaiting the ambulance which would mean the vacating of a bed in the ward, that he might be shaved and bathed and put into that bed.

One little girl, coming down with some sickness, lay in the dispensary where it was warm all day but had to go back to the railroad station for the night. It seemed a terrible thing to do, but there was no place to put her. What was to be done?

Two very sick babies, one with typhus, one without, occupied the same bed: at different ends to be sure, and the typhus baby had been thoroughly disinfected, but it was not what might be called an ideal arrangement. The baby without typhus was being given a chance for life at any rate and otherwise it would not have had one.

One morning a woman opened her eyes to find her husband in the bed beside her. They had been on their way down the line, refugees from Perm being sent to work in ammunition factories at Harbarovsk. Reaching Irkutsk she had left the teplushka to find the American Red Cross dressing station which someone had told her was on the tracks. The train, contrary to its usual custom had gone on in a very few minutes. The woman had found the dispensary and had been put to bed in the typhus ward in a very serious condition. This was aggravated by the certainty that her husband was lost to her. What was her relief and joy to find that he was beside her, ill with typhus though he might be. He had jumped off the train as it started, loath to leave their scanty possessions, but fearing to lose her. For two days he had lived as he could, sleeping in the railroad station, joining the bread and tea line provided by the government, vainly seeking her. He had then been sent by some one to the American Red

Cross dispensary because he himself had a raging fever. Here he had found her and was happy.

One man arrived at the dispensary demanding a wooden leg. He was a bit peevish about getting it, and said "that he thought that was one of the things the American Red Cross should have in stock." It would have been a good policy considering the number of men that requested them.

The American Red Cross work had come to be known the length and breadth of Siberia, but it was enlarging its scope and getting more familiar contact with the great masses of uneducated (as well as the educated) classes by such work as the public health nurses had instituted in Irkutsk.

RED CROSS "MOVIES"

"In Florence Nightingale's Footsteps" is the title of a new Red Cross Nursing Service motion picture, which has been released by the Red Cross Bureau of Pictures. This single reel film opens with a prologue of the Lady with a Lamp as she moved through the Barracks-Hospital at Scutari, shows the preparation of a nurse, from her probation, through the various phases of her course to graduation, and enrollment in the Red Cross, and concludes with several scenes of public health nursing. So that through the Red Cross Nurse the Spirit of Florence Nightingale is still abroad in the world.

The scenes of this picture have been made at two prominent hospitals in New York City. The basic theme of the film is to encourage young women to enter the nursing profession, by showing them the educational advantages offered through a good school of nursing, and also to present to them the opportunities which await them after graduation. In view of the Centenary in May, the scenes relating to Florence Nightingale are particularly timely, and the reel excellently suited to be shown at celebrations commemorating the birth of our Lady-in-Chief.

Further information regarding the use of this film may be secured from "Mr. William E. Waddell, Director, Red Cross Bureau of Pictures, 220 West 42nd Street, New York City."

NEWS ITEMS

It is with regret that the Red Cross announces the resignation of Elizabeth Ross, Director, Department of Nursing, New England Division.

Miss Ross has filled this position since the reorganization of the Red Cross and the creation of Divisional offices. She has rendered conspicuous service and developed a spirit of coöperation throughout her division rather unusual in its character.

Bernice Billings, a graduate of the New England Hospital for Women and Children, Boston, Mass., has been appointed to succeed Miss Ross. Miss Billings has had post-graduate training at Johns Hopkins Hospital, has engaged in visiting nursing in Winchester, Mass., has done public health nursing with the Boston Bay Hygiene Association, and until her affiliation with the Red Cross, has been connected with the Massachusetts State Department of Health.

Florence Waters, who was sent to Europe in 1914 on the Red Cross ship Relief as a member of one of its nursing units, has recently returned to America for a three months' visit. Miss Waters has had an unusual experience during this long period, serving in various capacities and localities until her final assignment to the Paris office as assistant to Miss Fitzgerald. She has recently resigned from this position and will follow Miss Fitzgerald to the League of Red Cross Societies as her assistant there.

THE RED CROSS CAPE

The most conspicuous article of the nurse's equipment—the Red Cross cape with its scarlet lining,—has been the subject of much anxiety on the part of Red Cross officials, who have made every effort to secure its return and prevent its misuse. The tradition of active service is woven into its very fabric and for this reason its use should be restricted to this purpose. Many nurses have held on to it to the last moment, hoping against hope that they might be allowed to keep it. This little poem written and pinned by one of the nurses to a cape which has recently been returned, seems to express the sentiment felt by many nurses for this article, in quite a remarkable way.

GOOD-BYE

I'm handing in my cape to-day
With its lining bright and gay;
I've worn it hard; it served me well;
I'll miss it more than I can tell.
It kept me warm when winds blew cold,
There's a caress in every fold;
And o'er the uniform of white,
To me it was the prettiest sight!
It brought good cheer to the soldier's heart,
In the Great World's War it played its part;
But now with a tear and a heartfelt sigh,
To my Red Cross Cape I'll say "Good-bye."

A RESERVE—*Emma Peter.*